

Flora Permit Frequently Asked Questions

Bureau of Environmental Services

Forestry Program

Chapter 701 - Trees and Flora of the Revised Code of the City of Indianapolis oversees trees and flora in the City/County public right of way and outlines the responsibilities involved. Part of that responsibility is to obtain a flora permit **before** working on a city-owned tree or planting trees and other flora in the public right of way. Public right of way includes public streets, lawn strips, alleys, parks, and any other property belonging to the city.

- When do I need a flora permit?
 - An approved flora permit for the city right of way flora is required when an individual or group wants to:
 - Plant trees, shrubs, or perennials
 - Prune a tree
 - Remove a tree
 - Chemically treat or fertilize a tree
- How do I check to see if a tree is on my property or the city's?
 - If you are unsure if the tree is in city right of way or not, call (317) 327-2281 and an inspector will come out and determine if the tree is in right of way or on private property.
- How much does a flora permit cost?
 - Presently, there is no cost to applying or receiving a flora permit.
- Can I plant a tree in right of way?
 - Yes, you can plant trees in the right of way *after* obtaining a flora permit to do so.
- Can I remove a tree from city right of way?
 - In certain cases yes you can remove a tree after you receive a flora permit to do so. However, you must first submit a flora application for tree removal to the Department of Code Enforcement. A city inspector will then determine whether or not the tree can be removed from right of way.
 - Typically living trees in the right of way will not be approved for removal without a reasonable cause. Living trees that are removed from the right of way must be replaced with a number of new trees that is determined by the city.

- Can I have a tree in the Right of Way pruned?
 - Yes, pruning of trees in city rights of way can be done. However, it must be done by an ISA Certified Arborist after a flora permit has been obtained by the arborist.
- How long does the flora permit application take to process?
 - Typically the application process takes three to five (3-5) business days from the date that our inspector receives the application. However, during peak planting season it may be up to seven to ten (7-10) days.
- What if I'm not sure if I am going to need a flora permit?
 - If you have any question as to whether or not you need a flora permit, call (317) 327-2281 and an inspector will determine if a flora permit is necessary or not for the work you want done in the city's right of way.
- Can I remove the tree causing the damage root damage to my septic system/sewer lateral or sidewalk?
 - Cracks occur first in sewer systems and septic systems and the roots simply find those cracks. Homeowners can utilize a regiment of copper sulfate flushed down their toilets to slow or stop the progression of tree roots into their sewers or septic fingers. This treatment should not harm the tree. Homeowners may utilize this technique at their own risk and should consult with a licensed plumber before application. Removing the tree will not fix the sewer or sidewalk problem.

To obtain a permit:

- Go to <http://www.indy.gov/eGov/City/CodeEnforcement/Permits/Pages/Flora.aspx> to download permit application
- Fill out all information and include planting and maintenance plans if needed
 - Don't know if you need plans, please call (317) 327-2281 to talk to an inspector about your project.
- Form may be mailed to address at bottom of form to the attention of Forestry, or faxed to (317)327-2274.

For more information about the City of Indianapolis Urban Forestry, go to <http://www.indy.gov/eGov/City/DPW/Residential/Pages/Urban-Forestry-.aspx>

Department of Code Enforcement

1200 Madison Ave., Ste. 100 | Indianapolis, IN 46225 | Phone: (317) 327-8700 | www.indy.gov/dce
Fax Numbers: Building - 327-8475 | Business Licensing - 327-0817 | Contractor Licensing - 327-8401
Crafts - 327-5397 | Infrastructure/Right of Way - 327-3125 | Permits - 327-5174 | Zoning - 327-8696